

Children of working class parents often died before they reached 5 years old. Jane and Andrew Smith are coming with their parents because New Zealand offers them a better chance of health and wealth.

Luke and his wife Rebecca are very religious but do not feel comfortable with the way the church is run in their Scottish village. They see New Zealand as a good place to start a new church. It seemed like New Zealand might be the Promised Land.

Susan and Thomas Brown had little chance of owning their own land in Britain because if you were born without land, the chances were you would never be able to afford any. To them, the chance of owning some land of their own in New Zealand was a powerful magnet and they had been told that soil there was very fertile.

Bruce Bonnet had lost his job as a farm labourer because farming was in a bad way in Britain at this time. More modern farming methods, including new machinery, were being used, meaning that fewer workers on farms were needed. Bruce had been forced to leave the countryside and look for a job in the closest already-overcrowded town. He had been there for six months and had been unable to find a steady job.

Simon Abbot was an adventurous fellow. Sometimes he had had scrapes with the law which had embarrassed his family. They were very pleased to see the back of him, even offering to pay the fare to New Zealand.

The Williams family, who had 6 children, lived in Manchester, which was a large city in the north of England. The living conditions there were terrible, as they were in many cities in England. The Williams were lucky to have a roof over their heads, but lived in only two rooms. The house had no proper drains, nor water supply, so diseases spread easily. Their house was jammed next to their neighbours and there were no trees or gardens. Crime was also a problem for them.

The Johnson family was very poor and both the parents worked in large factories in London. The oldest child, Sally, was turning 6 and would now also be forced to work long hours in the match-making factory with her mother. This was because since 1800 more and more complicated machines were making products that previously people had made in their villages. This was called the Industrial Revolution and caused huge industrial towns to grow around large factories, where many poor people worked in shocking conditions.